RES25-316
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 610

*ZONING & PLANNING (ZON)

***ZONING & PLANNING (ZON) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Nov 20, 2025 @ 09:00 AM

Support: 0

Oppose: 1

I wish to comment: 0

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Benjamin Sadoski	bsadoski@5.unitehere.org	96818
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
UNITE HERE Local 5	Oppose	Nov 19, 2025 @ 08:59 AM

UNITE HERE!
Cade Watanabe, Financial Secretary-Treasurer Gemma G. Weinstein, President Eric W. Gill, Senior Vice-President

November 18, 2025

Committee on Zoning and Planning, Honolulu City Council
Councilmember Esther Kia‘āina, Chair
Councilmember Tommy Waters, Vice Chair

Testimony in Opposition to Resolution 25-316

Chair Kia‘āina, Vice Chair Waters, and Committee Members,

UNITE HERE Local 5 represents 10,000 working people in the hotel, food service and health care industries across Hawaii. We oppose Resolution 25-316 as currently written. When this project was initially approved in 2016, Council required the developers to contribute $1 million toward community benefits in return for height, FAR and transitional setback variances. We do not believe that the proposal to give $1 million to the Waikīkī Business Improvement District Association for the purpose of, among other things, removing tables and chairs from Kūhiō Beach Park in favor of an unspecified “activation project” represents a community benefit. Homelessness is a significant and growing problem statewide; it impacts a variety of people for a variety of reasons; and we need to focus on solutions that address the root causes of homelessness and provide a positive path forward for those unfortunate enough to experience it. Using hostile architecture techniques to shift homeless people from one area in the community to another not only does not benefit people experiencing homelessness; it does not benefit the rest of the community either.

Although it may be beyond the scope of what the resolution can do, we ask Council to demand more from this developer. Given the removal of a restaurant and spa from the design, and the reduction in the number of rooms, and the extensions of time to start construction (even as King’s Village was closed in 2018), the benefits of the project may be significantly different from what was first projected in the 2015 Environmental Assessment. It is worth noting that two apartment buildings – potential housing if they had been redeveloped or renovated - were demolished to make way for this project. So too was a retail center that, according to the Environmental Assessment, provided about 200 full- and part-time jobs to community residents.

Please demand more from this developer rather than approving the currently-proposed community benefits package.

Mahalo.